Quixotic Elements in World Literature: A Comparative Study of Select Novels

Synopsis

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Introduction

World literature refers to the distribution of the works widespread beyond their country of origin. Primarily this term was used for masterpieces of Western European literature, world literature today is rapidly increasing in global context. Literature not only helps to shape our society but also it encourages exploring the literature in broad manner. There are number of elements in world literature like naturalism, existentialism, feminism, etc. Similarly quixotic elements are the most important elements in world literature. Quixotic means extremely idealistic, unrealistic and impractical especially in the pursuit of ideals or extravagantly chivalrous action. The origin of quixotic elements lies in the Spanish work *Don Quixote.*

Miguel de Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote de la Mancha* which is the most popular novel in the world. It is the only book of that period which gave way to idealism, noble virtues of chivalry and heroic achievements. In some ways, it has laid the very foundations of the Western novel. Today it has been adapted into many art forms like painting, sculpture, comic books, cartoon, television, books, films, myth, theatre, opera, etc. The Norwegian Book Club, the Noble Prize Institute organized a survey in 2002 where they asked 100 authors from all over the world to list out the 10 inordinate works of literature from existing resources. Don Quixote got more votes than other writers like Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Dryden, Samuel Jonson, Goethe, Marcel Proust, Leo Tolstoy, Gustav Flaubert and Franz Kafka. Lionel Trilling, the famous literary critic said that, "all prose fiction is variation on the theme of Don Quixote". He described it as the "problem of appearance and reality".

Between 1605 and 1615 Miguel de Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote de la Mancha* in the form of a chivalric romance and it became the most popular classic ever written. The book was originally written in Spanish and translated into English by Thomas Shelton in 1612 and later on Tobias Smollett also translated it. John Rutherford's Penguin classic version was published in 2000.The text is full of hidden themes, fantasy and reality, comic irony, use of parody, series of uncertain narrators and the characters who aspire to become literary figures. It became the inspiration for innumerable works and characters in the world literature. Spanish novelist Charlotte Lennox, French novelist Gustave Flaubert, British Indian novelist Salman Rushdie and British novelist Graham Greene and American novelist Kathy Acker are such great significant writers from world literature selected for detailed analysis in the present study. This study is an attempt to understand and examine the quixotic elements presented in particular works by these writers. The central idea of this research is how Miguel de Cervantes's novel *Don Quixote de la*

Mancha became inspiration for particular works by mentioned writers from world literature. It is an analysis of some characters and incidents either based on Don Quixote or influenced by him. Hence, the research topic entitled "Quixotic Elements in World Literature: A Comparative Study of Select Novels.

Quixotic elements are reflected in selected works by writers such as Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote: The Adventures of Arabella* (1752), Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856), Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), Graham Greene's *Monsignor Quixote* (1982) and Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream* (1986) are included in this research for a detail study. The proposed research deals with the adaptation and comparative study of quixotic elements in selected works written by mentioned writers.

Statement of the Problem:

The first great Spanish novel *Don Quixote* which laid the foundation of modern novel but has not received adequate critical attention. Hence, this proposed research aims to explore the quixotic elements in all manifestations. The quixotic elements in the selected works of these writers are the best example of the adaptation or reflection of *Don Quixote*. Present study deals with the significance of *Don Quixote* in world literature and also emphasizes on the comparative study of the quixotic text, characters and its influence on the immensely popular writers.

Aims and Objectives of Research:

1. To study the concept of quixoticism.
2. To find out the denotation of the term 'Quixotic'
3. To understand several aspects of quixotic elements
4. To comprehend the term quixotic elements in literature
5. To examine quixotic elements presented in the novels from world literature
6. To do the comparative study of selected works based on *Don Quixote*
7. To find out the influence of quixotic elements on human nature, behavior and life

Rational of the Study:

Literature includes many different kinds of stories which are actually eco of all the ideas. Miguel de Cervantes wrote *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha,* which is directly opposite of a chivalrous knight of Elizabethan era who would save his love. It shattered the concept of the literature of that time. Miguel de Cervantes has given the importance to the

world's past and present literature. As the Encarta Encyclopedia states, "The greatest figure of the Golden Age was Miguel de Cervantes". Charles Marvin Fairchild of Georgetown University said in his art exhibit that *Don Quixote* is generally considered the first great Western novel. It has been translated in more than hundred languages. *Don Quixote* became the role model for the authors from all over the world. There are numerous works in the world literature in which the theme of *Don Quixote* is used as it is. Sometimes characters are directly based on Don Quixote or other characters from the novel.

Hypothesis:

1. Quixoticism has been paid less attention in world literature.
2. Don Quixote is the story of unfortunate adventure.
3. In Cervantes's book animals like Rocinate are characters that take on life and add to the plot.
4. Memory and imagination is the central theme of the works based on Don Quixote.
5. The character of Don Quixote is role model for many other characters from British, Spanish and French literature.
6. Most of the time the protagonist of quixotic novel is impractical, extravagantly chivalrous and attracted towards the chivalrous tales of Don Quixote.
7. Quixotic elements are found in every human nature in more or less manner.

Research Methodology:

The present study uses analytical and interpretative model which includes the traditional methods as well as modern methods. The study is based on primary sources include *The Female Quixote: The Adventures of Arabella*, *Madame Bovary*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *Monsignor Quixote*, *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream.* It aims at analyze and interpret these texts with explication, exploration and generalization of quixotic elements. The secondary sources include books, generals, articles and dissertations thesis websites and so on.

Scope and Limitations:

The purpose of this research is to underline the need to explore quixoticism. The study of quixoticism and the quixotic elements in world literature, especially in novels is less explored area. The first great Spanish novel Don Quixote laid the foundation of modern novel. Many authors have imitated Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and many authors are still trying to imitate him. Along with literature *Don Quixote* has been adapted in many art forms like music,

painting, sculpture, etc. The present research work concentrates only on the selected novels *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) by Salman Rushdie, *Monsignor Quixote* (1982) by Graham Green, *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream* (1986) by Kathy Acker, *Madame Bovary* (1856) by Gustave Flaubert, *The Female Quixote: The Adventures of Arabella* (1752) by Charlotte Lennox. All other novels of these writers are excluded from the research. The present work highlights quixoticism and reflection of the quixotic elements in select novels from world literature.

Tentative Chapterization

The current study consists of six chapters

Chapter One:

It will be titled "introduction". It is the proposal of the study. It consists of an introduction of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the rational of the study, hypothesis, the questions of the study the methodology, the scope of the study and the tentative chapterization. It includes the detail study of the concept of quixoticism and quixotic elements along with the history of publication and translation of *Don Quixote.*

Chapter Two:

It will be titled "Literature Review". It consists of theoretical study and literature review of the study. It deals with various texts, articles, and essays published as literature review on *Don Quixote.*

Chapter Three:

It will be titled as "Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh"* and Graham Greene's *Monsignor Quixote.* This present chapter analyzes quixoticism and quixotic elements in *The Moor's Last Sigh* and Graham Green's *Monsignor Quixote* published in 1986 with many quixotic elements.

Chapter Four:

It will be titled as Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream* and Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary.* Characters Emma and Don Quixote in both these novels are full of quixotic elements in nature.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

It will be titled as "conclusion and scope for future research" It highlights the conclusions, findings and scope for future research. It will sum the comparative study of quixoticism and quixotic elements in the selected works of Salman Rushdie, Graham Green, Kathy Acker, Gustave Flaubert, Charlotte Lennox. It will trace the relevance of the quixotic

elements in the age of globalization and internationalization. It will sum up with the findings of the research.

This proposal is tentative and subjected to any later modification recommended by the supervisor.

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